

Nehemiah 9:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

Analysis

Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

This verse within Nehemiah 9 addresses themes of confession, God's faithfulness, corporate prayer, covenant history. Extended corporate prayer recounts God's faithfulness through Israel's history while honestly confessing persistent covenant violations. This passage demonstrates biblical principles applicable across both testaments—God's sovereignty combined with human responsibility, faith expressed through obedient action, and the necessity of both individual and corporate commitment to covenant faithfulness. Nehemiah models leadership that combines vision, prayer, courage, integrity, and perseverance amid sustained opposition.

Historical Context

Nehemiah's account occurs during Persian imperial dominance (539-331 BC), specifically 445-433 BC under Artaxerxes I. The spiritual reforms under Ezra and Nehemiah shaped Judaism for centuries, establishing Scripture's centrality and patterns of worship continuing into the intertestamental period and beyond. The Persian period was crucial transitional time when Jewish identity shifted from monarchical nationalism to Torah-centered covenantal community. Without political independence, the people's cohesion depended on shared scripture,

temple worship, and covenant obedience. This established patterns persisting through the Second Temple period into New Testament times. Understanding this context illuminates Jesus's ministry among a people shaped by these reforms and challenges.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does regular engagement with Scripture transform understanding of God and His will for your life?
2. What specific commitments do you need to make (or renew) regarding Bible reading, worship, and obedience?
3. How can the principles demonstrated in this passage inform your response to current challenges in your life or church?

Interlinear Text

ל א	בַּמִּדְבָּר	כָּל־כֹּלֶתָם	שָׁנָה וְאַרְבָּעִים	יָמִים
H3808	H4057	H3557	H8141	H705
	them in the wilderness	didst thou sustain	years	Yea forty
ל א	וְרַגְלֵיהֶם	וְלֹא	שְׁלֹמֹתֵיהֶם	חָסִים רוּ
H3808	H7272	H1086	H8008	H2637
	and their feet	waxed not old	nothing their clothes	so that they lacked
בָּצָקוֹ:				
				H1216
				swelled

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 2:7 (Parallel theme): For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.

Deuteronomy 8:4 (Parallel theme): Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

Psalms 34:10 (Parallel theme): The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.

Acts 13:18 (Parallel theme): And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

Exodus 16:35 (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy 8:2 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

Deuteronomy 29:5 (Parallel theme): And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.

Amos 5:25 (Parallel theme): Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?